

From Silence to Voice: A collaborative international partnership to develop a digital resource for use in clinical and education settings about sexual violence from perspectives of students, educators and survivors.

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Background

Gender based violence (GBV) – which includes sexual violence - is a significant global public health and societal problem, recognised as a global human rights issue by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2017). Global estimates indicate that 1 in 3 women experience physical/sexual violence in their lifetime (WHO, 2017). GBV/SV exerts a detrimental impact not only on the lives and health of women, but also those who witness abuse and has been identified as a large scale problem in South Africa with recorded estimates that a woman is raped every seventeen seconds. The impact of GBV/SV on the physical and psychological wellbeing of those who experience abuse is wide ranging. It includes the immediate physical effects for example, physical injury as well as longer term chronic ill health as a result, acute and enduring psychological trauma, mental ill-health, alongside secondary physiological health issues such as gynaecological and sexual health (Feder et al. 2011).

It is well evidenced however that healthcare professionals across the spectrum do not respond effectively often due to a lack of knowledge or professional confidence and their own values and assumptions surrounding GBV/SV (McGarry et al. 2015). Education is pivotal, and a proven means to tackle a growing global problem. This includes pre-qualifying healthcare students who are often not exposed to education about GBV/SV within their current curricula.

Working with our project partners and key stakeholders in South Africa during 2019, including women who have experienced GBV/SV, the aim of this research was to engage stakeholders in the co-production of a digital e-learning resource to use across multiple healthcare disciplines on GBV/SV.

Our aim is to describe the process of an international collaboration, provide the context using survey data and present the digital resource and the evaluations conducted on the application and use within education and clinical settings.

References:

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World Health Organisation (2017) Violence against women <http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women> (accessed 7.7.18)